
Whitehall the 21. Jan. 1667.

Let this Discourse be Printed.

*By the Appointment of the Right
Honourable the Lord Arlington,
His MAJESTIE'S Principal
Secretary of State.*

Joseph Williamson.

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A
Free Conference
Touching
The present STATE
O F
ENGLAND
Both at home and abroad :
In order to the DESIGNS
O F
FRANCE.

LONDON,
Printed for Richard Royston, and to be sold by
Richard Chiswell at the Rose and Crown in
St. Paul's Church-Yard. 1678.

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TO THE READER.

THIS Conference being imaginarily Scened, and yet really performed out of the Treasure of a very great Minister of State's Capacity ; it was thought fit to be published now, and not before, because that respect ought to be pay'd to the Secret of his Majestie's Affairs, so as nothing should anticipate the King's own labours, to give the people satisfaction in his due time touching the tender care that He is graciously pleased to take of all his Subjects in point of Honour, Safety, Freedom,
A 3 Union;

To the Reader.

Union, and Commerce : which nothing could more advance than the Conclusion of the Treaty newly made betwixt England and the States of the United-Provinces; which without flattery may be demonstrated to men of understanding to aim at nothing but the Good of his Subjects in general, exempt from all manner of private Interest whatsoever. Blessed be God then that it is so happily concluded ; and that we have a KING whom nothing can ever alienate from the true Interest of his Realms, nor no corrupt Counsellour (let him be thought to be never so powerful or crafty in order to his own Advantages) prevent the Wisdom and the Integrity of such a Prince from prevailing above all the Artifices and Frauds of those who would persuade

perswade the Nation, (were they competent Masters of their Art enough so to do) that those Counsellours who are not interested can be less prudent or successful than such as did make it their business to appropriate all to themselves, and nothing to their Master. The French King is much commended for his Parts and Activity: but let us see him out-do the King of England in this particular of the Treaty, both in courage and conduct, and then I shall be apt to attribute his Grandeur as much to natural Abilities as extraordinary Fortune, but not before.

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A
FREE CONFERENCE

Touching
The present State of *ENGLAND*,
Both at home and abroad :

In order to the Designs of
FRANCE.

THE Adventure which happened unto me lately is of so extraordinary a nature, and contains so many important Discoveries in relation to the publick Good in its Progress, that I should prove defective towards my Country, if I did not candidly publish all the Passages, both touching the Occasion, and the Effects of what followed from this Accident.

Know then, that a Peer of the Realm of *England*, and one whose Merit, Quality,

lity, and the Place which he holds in the Administration of the Affairs of the Kingdom are remarkable; did invite sundry of his Lordship's best friends to a magnificent Feast, and amongst the rest he had the kindness not to omit me out of the number: where the excellence of the Cheer which he made to his Guests, after a most noble manner, put the whole Company into such a refined humour of conversing together, that the Entertainment was but one intire pleasing Debate, how to express our compleat enjoying of each other. I was not wanting with the uttermost of vigour and solace to uphold the Genius of this Conference. But as the freest speakers do commonly come by the worst in discourse, and are the soonest exposed to enterprising lashes; I found my self to be attacqued in so many places at once with the swiftness of other mens reasons and wits, who held the opposite Arguments, that although I were something heated, yet there remained unto me presence of mind enough (and success of Intervals) to get insensibly out of the Press, whilst the

the Disorder and Confusion lasted, (which is usual at such Meetings) into another Room. I retired then, pursuing the opportunity, into a fair Gallery, which surprised my Eyes with the rich Ornaments wherewith it was furnished; but not without trouble neither, and a Curiosity beyond the Opticks of the place, which increased there; so as I was diverted from any farther consideration of the Furniture, because the place seemed to lie too neer the Enemy, to dwell any longer upon those Objects. Wherefore I went into another Chamber hard by, which instantly filled me with new Apprehensions, by the means of several large Looking-Glasses hanging on the Walls; which shewed me my own proper Figure at length on every side, and from thence imprinted in my wounded Imagination as many Adversaries as there were angular Reflexions out of each Mirrour; that appeared to pursue me so furiously, that I ran on violently with my head forwards, in order to some Escape, to the door of another Chamber adjoyning thereunto, which opened with

with such resistance, when I thrust against it, as if it had been forced with a Petard : And thus falling in the attempt, I was fottunned, that it was a good while after before I could come to my self again. But at last having partly recovered my spirits, I was surpris'd with a fresh astonishment, as much amazing me as the former had done that I repeated : For when I began to open my eyes half way, finding that till then they had been altogether unuseful to me, I attributed the disorder to want of Sight, often feeling, in regard of the darkness of the Room, to try whether they were still in my head or not. Yet perceiving, betwixt discerning and doubting, that all I assayed of this kind was to no purpose ; after having deplored the bitterness of an imaginary loss, I groped on more and more in the dark, until I chanced to come to an *Alcone*, where feeling with my hands I took fast hold upon the *Alcone*, and grasped the pillar of a Bed, which had I not light upon, I must have fallen the second time. For, thrusting hard against one of
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the Posts, the Counter-stroak of the Wood threw me all along into the middle of a Couch, where I remained stretched forth like a Coarse without any motion, in the same posture of a precipitate Swoon. And then it was that the vapours of my body, which were disturbed by the first mistake, confusedly did stir through all the parts in the agitated fluctuancy of a storm ; though by degrees growing to be undeceived, Sleep, which appeaseth all the Mutinies in humane creatures, did naturally and more agreeably seise upon my Faculties, and compose the Tempest with perfect tranquillity of Mind and animal Operations, as if I had never been so discomposed. 'Tis impossible to tell you how long I continued in the state of this *Interregnum* betwixt life and death, nor what care the Company took to learn what was become of me, but in vain ; blaming me for having left them, or rather the War begun, using all sorts of means to find where I was, and bring me back to the Combate.

I shall only tell you by the way, that
about

about Sun-set, a great noise was raised by two of the servants of the House, who entered suddenly into the Chamber where I lay ; which assured me as I awakened that I was yet living; and the blazing of the Wax-tapers, which they set upon the Table and Cup-boards, made me extremely joyful at the Restauration of my sight, which in my opinion till then was absolutely gone from me. But then a third apprehension seized on my Powers, first, to be caught in such a Posture, and exposed to the innocent jealous which might be made by the Guests on the subject of my strange Disorder, and precipitated Flight from them. But as I sought my eyes once more, to steal away out of this Society for all night, and not be seen by any body, another noise obliged me to keep close where I was upon the Bed, and draw the Curtains home, not to be discovered. I was not long in this Concealment, when I saw come into the same place three Persons, whose Deserts in this Relation must be better known than their Names, and the importance of their Interests in the State, by what I am going
NOW

now to say of those particulars, because I am strictly obliged not to reveal them. These Strangers the Master of the House did very civilly introduce into the Chamber, who without many Complements sat down on the seats which were prepared for them near the Table. My Sleep had digested those Fumes, and dissipated all the Clouds of my Understanding: therefore judging that the Cause that assembled such great Personages together there in this secret Entertainment could not be but of the highest importance; both the Curiosity, and the shame of having them witnesses to my Disorder, obliged me to keep firm to my Post, within the cover of the Bed, and to lend an attentive ear to all their discourse. For the Master of the House began the Overture of the Conference in the terms following.

In that part which we do hold of the Government of the State, it is not enough that a sincere Amity doth link us in one band of Interest and Esteem particularly to each other, if we be not also united in the same Judgment as to all which
concerns

concerns the publick Good. In our former Conferences we used to take just measures how to rectifie things *within the Realm*; but now it rests with us to agree upon some Maxims which are to be maintained in regard of *Forreign matters*, to the end that in these Rencontres, wherein we are to give counsel, we may act in all things with a perfect Concert: which no doubt will give a great weight to the Resolutions which shall be formed thereupon and the present Case; since never have any Counsellours treated of nicer Points, nor more serious ones than those which are to be debated among us to day. The Fire is already kindled in our Neighbourhood; the Monarchy of *Spain* is just upon the brink of falling to the ground, if it be not succoured; and *France* in a condition to avow the vast Design which that Crown hath long meditated, as well against the Peace of *Europe* as the Commerce of our Navigations, if a powerful Fence be not quickly made, to keep the *French* within their Bounds. Wherefore all the rest of the Forces of *Europe* stand at gaze, expect-
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in reference to the French Designs. 9

ing the Result of what *England* doth determine herein, considering us as the Counter-balance, which time-out-of-mind hath held the scales even betwixt those two Great Monarchies, for the safety of all the rest. They wait but our giving of the Sign to joyn with us in the common Defence: and the better share of them seek it from *England*; and the others have their eyes open towards our Conduct, to take their measures also by no other model but what we shall trace out unto them.

There is no need of a Providence extraordinarily enlightened, to judge which is our true Interest in this Conjunction; but the present state of our Affairs doth not leave us the same facilities to follow it, in which we do abound as to the knowledge thereof.

Mean-while the Mischief presses forwards, and doth not afford place nor time sufficient to expect a benefit of other Vicissitudes, which run sufficiently against us; nor to Regulate our Resolutions by those Events, which take too impetuous a part in the Cause on that

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side

side which we ought most to fear. Therefore it is more than season to form our fundamental Maxim, on which all our Conduct is to move in this present Conjunctions; and at this very Instant decide, whether we will chuse to be simple Spectators, or take some part to act in this Tragedy: since the Resolution which we shall fix thereupon will be the Center, from whence we must draw all our Lines afterwards. VVhich is the proper Point that we are to discourse of now among our selves here, before we do give our Opinions on the whole matter to the Publick; and in which particular I desire the rather to be enlightened by your wise Reasonings, by how much the more I am assured, That the sole Good of the State is the only Rule and Object of all your Counsels.

As soon as ever he had uttered these words, one of the Three, after casting down of his eyes, and pondering what he was to say to the rest, with having thought before he advised, began his discourse thus:

If late Experience had not taught us
enough

enough to our cost, that it is much easier to begin a War, than successfully to get out of it when once it is commenced, I would enlarge my self on that Subject, to represent unto you piece by piece the Dangers, Incommodities, and Losses which such a Resolution usually doth carry along with it; where frequently the Conquerer finds he is more charged with Debts than with Trophies, and the people alwayes have cause to mingle their Acclamations with Tears, in the course of such expensive Triumphs; since before any Edifice is begun, the Dimensions how to settle a solid Foundation to undertake the Warrupon, should previously be considered, by measuring our Means and Forces as well as those of the Enemy with whom we are to fight; and the like touching their Power, whose Interest we intend to embrace.

Our Forces and Means you all know are already exhausted with long and sharp Wars, both at home and abroad; and by the Hand of God, which hath been heavy upon us in the late *Pestilence* and in the *Firing* of the City of *London*:

Wherefore 'tis but now that we begin by the means of Peace to breathe again; which Peace also is not firmly established. Time then is requisite for us to take breath and recover in, after so terrible an Agitation: nor can any thing be so dangerous unto this State as a Relapse in the midst of Amendment. If the noise of our Neighbours doth awaken us, our Weariness likewise invites us to seek some Repose: and in case there be danger to suffer the Growth of a suspected Power, there will not be less peril in the checking of that power unprepared. You know, as well or better than I can tell you, the Condition of the Revenue, and the excessive Expence of this Realm, which inevitably must carry the War from home, unless we mean supinely to be destroyed: and therefore of necessity must our Wings be suffered to grow again after this clipping, before that we do off'r to make a new Flight. You cannot be ignorant too, that Commerce is the Soul & the Life of this Kingdom, which is the Chanel from whence the Abundance of it flows: And the
Wealth

Wealth which we formerly enjoyed, and rendered us so considerable in the World, besides the fresh Experiment of the Disorder and Interruption which the War brought into all the Traffick of the Land, hath made us clearly see, that for Merchant-mens Fleets to be changed into Naval Armies, and the substance of the People melted into Magazines unusefully, which might more profitably be employed in rich and gainful Navigations, cannot be the proper Interest of *England*.

If we consider the present State of *France*, VVe shall find that all the rest of *Europe* bows under that Power; and those who are the most concerned to succour *Spain* bleed at the Nose onely, without being able to break the Impostume within. The Intelligences of *France* and their Practices make their way every-where, either with Bribes or by Address; Victory waits still on all their Motions: and by having redressed the Abuses of their Exchequer, they have laid an unexhaustible Foundation of Money within themselves. Over and

above that, the *French* are a Nation, or rather a seminary of Nobility and Soldiers, so versed in the trade of War, as this provision puts them in a Posture never to be savingly justled.

I grant, Their Designs are Vast, and their Pretensions ill grounded : but how can we take Cognizance of that ? are we Knights-errant, to expose our Lives in the revenging of other mens Quarrels ; The large Interposition of Sea, which divides us from the rest of the World, may shelter us enough from their Attempts, without founding of our safety upon the Conservation of our Neighbours.

But suppose we had such an abundance of Charity to spare, as to hazzard our own safety in favour of another's ; we should at least be secured beforehand, that when we are at a second Charge of succouring them, it might prove profitable unto them ; otherwise the mischief being grown to that point of Extremity where now it rests, all insignificant Remedies of this nature would but anger them the more to no
pur-

purpose. And *Spain* being deeply engaged in the War of *Portugal*, which is alone able to give the *Spaniards* work enough, as the *Spanish* Councils stand divided, and according to the slowness of their Operations, their Treasure being exhausted likewise, and the principal places of *Flanders* in the hands of the *French*, and those which remain unconquered hardly in a condition to make any Resistance when they shall be attacked, which disposes that Crown to seek a Peace with *France* on any Terms; and the Propositions in order to a League Offensive and Defensive with them, which they make to us, being tendred onely to *England* as a wily Lure to oblige the *French* to conclude it the sooner, out of an Apprehension that we may resolve to assist *Spain*; why should we rashly, I pray, thrust our Sickle into this blighted Corn?

Indeed, when Inconveniencies are visible on all sides of the Prospect of such Treaties, the wisest Counsel sure is to suspend the Resolution awhile. For on which part can we place our Interest

thus, without incurring blame justly ? The Party of *Spain* is weak and unlucky ; that of *France* is unjust, and contrary to our good : Shall we then sacrifice our selves for *Spain*, which for three years together hath stood Idle, with their arms folded a-cross, without so much as proffering to help us, whilst three of the greatest Powers of Christendom let one another Bloud, and thus were only Passive in our Ruin ? Must we then joyn with *France*, which were so lately combined with our Enemies to destroy us, and that tore the Victory out of our hands when we had it sure ? Shall we contribute the Liquor of our Veins to facilitate their Progress, which ought to be so redoubted by this Nation, and so become instrumental towards the erecting of a *Colossus* which must certainly tread us under foot with the weight of it ? All these Considerations, which I submit to your Prudence, oblige me to conclude, That there being no Part to be taken in this War which is not destructive ; the best will be to take no Part, but sit still, and observe how the

the Game is play'd, and in the mean time to provide for the repairing our Revenues, and quieting of Disorders at home, by conciliating and re-uniting the minds of the People, the Re-establishment of Commerce, and to put our selves into such a Condition, that the Conquerour may not be able to make a wrong use of his Victory to our prejudice. And in the mean time, not to remain altogether Idle in the common Danger of *Europe*, we may contribute our endeavours to obtain a Peace, and by a happy Accommodation stop the course of these Conquests, which give us such just Jealousie.

He had scarce made an end of speaking, when a little murmur arose among the rest of the Conferrers, which made me conceive that they did no wayes approve of what he did urge. Wherein I found that I was not deceived neither; because he which sat right over against him, answered him presently after this manner.

If Peace were a Benefit which alwaies did depend upon our own Choice, and
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if War were not, ordinarily speaking, a Mischief as necessary as the other is ; the Question which we do Treat of now might easily be resolved, and would not require any longer deliberation. But it is not enough to conserve Peace, to have a pacifick Spirit, if our Neighbours likewise be not of the same Disposition towards it ; which in effect is to reckon without the Host, by founding the hopes of our future Quiet, barely on the promises of our own Moderation ; since those which are the most in Love with Peace are oftentimes involved in the opposite Agitation, whether they will or no, by some violent motion of Fortune ; and so frequently stumble upon War in the Flight which they make from it, and thus suffocate the Peace by too much avoiding War.

I do avow that the Reasons which were alledged before could not be answered, if he who did so well deduce them were able to assure us upon good grounds, that in keeping our selves Neuters in this War of the *Low Countreys*, we might be sheltered from the storm of another

another War, both in the present and the future Tense of such Vicissitudes; or peaceably and long enjoy so happy a Tranquility, which makes him believe that we ought to despise, for that speculation, all manner of useful Occasions which Fortune doth daily offer unto us. But in truth, my Lord, Would you venter to be Caution thereupon to the State, and pawn your Faith to the Kingdome and your Honour concerning the Event? For my own part, I hold you too wise and too quick-sighted, to imagine meerly on the presumption of unsolid hopes, that there can be the least shadow or colour of safety remaining for us, if one of these two Monarchies which are at this time Engaged in a War should fall under the absolute power of the other, or if they do re-unite again by an Agreement, in which possibly, as we have handled the matter, we may very well not be comprehended. In case you'll avow this Truth, which all the World knows to be so, it follows that you must grant, that all those Inconveniencies which were already alledged to keep us out,
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all kinds of Engagement are not longer valid, when there is an indispensable necessity, and the VVelfare and the Safety of the State are at stake.

I shall not enlarge my self hereon, to represent unto you that our Predecessours ever held this to be a fundamental Maxime of their Conduct, to hold the Balance equal between these two Great Monarchies, and that on which side soever they turned the Scales, Victory did usually follow that Counterpoise, which never failed to put things into that just Temperament that preserves the Health of this Realm. By which means in some sort they made themselves the Arbitrators of Christendom, because by affording their Help unto one of the two Parties, they became in effect Masters over them both: by still keeping one of them at their Devotion, and in our Dependency, through the prospect of those Succours which they do continually need from hence; and the other, with the apprehension of this Assistance. For thus the *English*, what with the force of their Arms, and the power of Arbitrating in Treaties,

Treaties, have alwayes been the Law-givers to the Success both of their Friends and their Enemies, by holding within the palms of their hands the Results of VVar and Peace, finding both in the one and the other those Advantages and Safeties which this Nation most desired.

But laying aside these old absolute Maxims, from which notwithstanding wise men will not willingly depart without the pressure of some invincible Necessity, to come to the Circumstances of the present time; It is evident that the war of the *Low Countries* cannot possible terminate otherwise than by the Fall and Oppression of one of the two Parties, or by an Accommodation made betwixt them. If they do agree, and that *England* hath no share in the Treaty, who will assure us that they'l not unite for our Ruine; or at least, *France*, which cannot remain long without war, will not turn their Arms against us? But if *Spain* falls, we shall then be like Dancers of the Ropes that have lost their Counterpoise, and so are ready to tumble down

down every step they make. What good opinion soever we have of *France*, it cannot be denied, notwithstanding, that in this Case, after the *French* have triumphed over *Spain*, they will be Masters over our Fortune too; and that our being thus must intirely depend upon their Moderation. For, Gentlemen, do you think that we can take rest securely upon so weak a Foundation as the Giddiness of their Charity is? since 'tis certain that the *most Christian King* hath too much Ardour and desire of Glory to dwell in Idleness at home, after such a Conquest. And therefore, seeing his Dominions and Reputation notably increased, he will form to himself new *Idea's* of enlarging the bounds of his Empire both by Sea and Land, according to the knowledge which we have of the divers Inclinations of his Court; whereof some will put him on to become Master of the Commerce of *Europe*, and employ those vast Treasures he hath heaped together in order to that Design this way; others, to engage him in the finishing of his Conquests over all the *Low Countreys*:
and

and some likewise, to begin by us to open the Path to the Subduing of all other States which may probably oppose this Design. So that which advice soever of these he doth embrace, 'twill be equally dangerous as to us here, and perpetually oblige us to stand upon our Guard, with the Burthen of a continued Expence on our backs, as well as the Incommodities of a VVar, though we seem to be in Peace with him.

On this Position then I say, that the worst Party for *England* that can be taken, whether by choice or necessity, is that of sitting Neuters. By uniting with *Spain* we do follow our ancient Maxim and Interest, which hath ever been successful to this Nation, which is, to be still Masters of the Balance betwixt these two Monarchies, as I urged before. Should we therefore embrace the Party of *France*, we may hope for a considerable portion in the Spoils of *Spain*. And both in the one and the other case we shall find our Surety and other Advantages in the Treaties of Peace which shall be made. But by remaining Neutral we must

must needs equally offend both; and so cannot eschew being exposed friendless to the Resentments and the Ambition of the Conqueror, as well as the Scorn and the Reproaches of all the rest of Christendom, for having insipidly abandoned our proper Reason of State, without being either good or wicked in a matter of such universal Concernment, whereby the name of *English-men* will remain so much in the Oblivion of *Europe*; that no body will scarce remember there is such a Nation in the World; excepting only those who have a mind to Conquer us.

I read in the Scripture, so base a Character of none as of them who are *neither hot nor cold*: And able Statesmen have alwayes reproved this kind of Tepidness or Half-conduct, to be both unuseful and dangerous. *Media via nec Amicos parat, nec Inimicos tollit*. Wherefore England must of necessity either preserve the *Low-Countryes*, against the Usurpation of the *French*, which is our Bulwark; or raise a new Fence, that shall shelter us from being Conquered.

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To preserve the first then, *Spain* must be assisted from hence ; and to make a new Rampart, we must divide the Spoil with *France*. Experience hath sufficiently shewn us, that our Ports are not inaccessible ; and Reason demonstrates, that those can never be secure from the like Attempts, but by keeping a powerful Fleet out at Sea, that we may be absolute Masters there. 'Tis a Maxim also which admits neither of exception nor diminution, That a well-governed Kingdom is obliged to arm when War is kindled in the Neighbourhood. And though we should resolve to take part neither with the one Interest nor the other ; yet we must be in a Posture to hinder the Torrent from coming upon our Land, that so the Conquerour may not have a mind to extend his Conquests hitherwards. Here then is the Charge of Arming, which on this Counjuncture is inevitable, the equipping of a Fleet, and raising of Souldiers to be mutually entertained at the Charge of the People, if we do not speedily take some Party ; and all this Expence without Glory, or hope to get
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any fruit by so unprofitable a Counsel, wherein our Souldiers will never learn the Discipline of War, or extract any Utility from such Prizes, as being incapable after this manner to share in the Booty, or in the Victories and Treaties of Accommodation, according to their several events. Whereas by taking part either with *Spain* or *France*, the Charge would be much less, because he whom we aid would largely contribute towards it; and the Prizes gotten at Sea might help to discharge the Expence both of the Naval and the Land-Forces. And thus would our Souldiers be exercised, and our Nation make a noise again abroad, and regain the Reputation which we have of late but too ignominiously lost in the World. For when our men shall be trained up daily in strict Discipline beyond Seas, we shall by this means establish a Seminary of good and able fighting men at the Cost of others, which will be the firm Pillars of the Party, and render us considerable in the eyes of all our Neighbours. Besides, this Course may be a vent so to discharge the Realm
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of ill humours, & a great company of Idle persons, which now, being without Employment, are a burthen to the Publick, and who one day are capable too of disturbing the domestick Tranquillity of the State: whereas, on the contrary, what Success soever this War shall have, we shall alwayes find our Accompt in the end of an Accommodation, whereof, being thus prepared, we cannot fail of having the principal Benefit and part.

All these Considerations then seem unto me to be so convincing, that they do oblige me absolutely to condemn the Opinion of Neutrality, as inconsistent with our Glory, Safety, and Fundamental Reasons of State; by concluding positively, that we ought to lend an ear to those Propositions which shall be made unto us from all Parties, and embrace those which shall be found to be most agreeable and convenient to the Interest of the Kingdom. And in the interim, to be the more considered by both these great Parties, and better assured against all manner of Attempts; my Advice is, That without any longer loss of time, a

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strong Fleet should be presently got ready ; and that as many dayes as we have to spare before the next Campagne, since now every hour is precious that is not well spent as to this purpose, may be employed to render us henceforwards necessary unto them whose Cause we shall resolve to embrace, and as formidable to those against whom we intend to declare: so that on both sides we may be the Commanders of the whole affairs, and give it respite or motion by the sole Rule of the Interests of *England*.

After that he had spoken thus, I did observe by the Countenance of the other two persons that had not yet spoken, that this Discourse did not displease them; wherefore without any farther reflexion, one of them briskly began to speak to this effect :

Your Reasons, said he, are so convincing, that I do not only render my consent unto them without any Reply, but mean to make use of them to serve as the *Basis* and Foundation of that Edifice which I have a long time meditated upon, in order to the fundamental Maxims
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of State of this Nation. Therefore, without more ceremony or delay, I see that we must act, and take one of the two Parties. For any other Counsel would be dangerous and destructive, by exposing of us to a thousand Inconveniencies, which all the humane Prudence imaginable cannot be capable of preventing or avoiding in process of time. I remain also agreed with you, that in the choice of which Party we are to take, we ought not to consider more than just what our own Interest properly is, which is the Rule of that Conduct of Monarchis, that, as the Soul and the Spirit vivifying the whole Figure before us, gives it motion in the Body of the State.

It rests then to Form the Consequences upon these Principles, and decide which of the two Parties is the most convenient. *France* offers Roses unto us; *Spain* nothing but Thorns. The first presents us with a Scheme of Conquests without Dangers; the last with prospect of Dangers without Profit. The one invites us to be their Companions of assured Victories, of which they have already

beaten the way ; the other doth sollicite us and implore our Aid onely to help them out of the mire, without any other Benefit than, as the old Proverb sayes, *There's your labour for your pains*, at the price of our Blood and Lives. If we shall engage in the Assistance of *Spain*, in succouring them we run a *Risco* of being lost our selves, without yet being able to re-establish them : But by joyning with *France*, we shall partake of the Spoils with them, which we can never by force be able to take out of their hands ; since the Progress of *France* is now arrived at such a point of Effect, that all our Powers combined together are not sufficient to stop it ; and then both our Resistences and Succours will serve but to ruine the *Spaniards* the sooner, and bring the Vengeance of the *French* upon our own heads. And if *Spain* comes to sink under the weight of the War, all the Burthen of that Fall centers upon *England* alone. In fine, 'tis agitated therefore singly as to this particular, Whether we will needs chuse to embark in a Vessel so driven with storms, or in a Ship

Ship which sails at ease with full Sails, seconded with the favorable Gales of Fortune.

But in case all these material Objections cannot divert us from engaging in the ill Fortune of the *Spaniards*, let us see on what Terms at least we can assist them usefully. If we shall send Troupes into the *Low Countreys* to their Aid, 'tis, in effect, to overwhelm them by the very weight and charge of those Succours, and sacrifice so many of our own Subjects to Famine and misery, as we do thus send Souldiers unto them; because they have neither Countrey enough left to Lodge them in when they come thither, nor the Means to Entertain them after once they are there.

If we succour them meerly by Sea, that kind of help will not hinder *France* from taking of their Towns in the mean time one by one; and so though we should a little incommode *France*, we shall not ease *Flanders* at all, and such an Assistance will in conclusion prove none, because 'tis an Application of the Plaister too remotely, and on the

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wrong

wrong side of the Wound.

If then the Loss of the *Low Countreys* be inevitable, let us do what we can; were it not much better that we should have our share in the Parcels of so great a Shipwrack, than to suffer *France* to ingross them all to themselves? since, supposing that we do divide Booties with the *French* on this occasion, the Places which by this means must necessarily fall into our hands will be so many new Bulwarks to *England*, which may shelter us for the future against their vast Designs; of which the Partisans of *Spain* make a Chimærical Monster, to intimidate the *English* from taking part with their best and properest Interest in the Case. But when once we are entred into a Communion of Conquests with the *French*, the subduing of *Flanders* will serve us as Ladders to arrive at other Projects by, wherein we may probably hope to find our Profit and Satisfaction mutually together, as well as the Pleasure of a just Revenge. I set aside the Conquest of the *Indies*, which we could not fail to encompass, whilst
France

France doth hold all the Forces of *Spain* in play both at Sea and Land, and so occupied, that they'l never be able to retain what they hold in the *New World*, no more than that remainder of Territories which yet they stand possessed of nearer hand.

Wherefore as to what regards the Interest of this Kingdome, what I have last urged methinks might suffice to make you of my Opinion. And if we do impartially consider that of the *Royal Family*, What can be more important and convenient for it, than to have at their Devotion a neighbouring Power hard by which is so formidable, and that is able to protect them in a few hours from all manner of Revolutions that they may (and perhaps not without cause neither) apprehend at home, by thus commanding both the Treasures and the Armies of *France* whenever they shall have any need of them, to put a Bridle in the mouths of all such as do seek to check their Authority?

I avow that our properest Interest were to hold the Ballance equal between

Spain

Spain and *France*, if we could ; but we should then have thought sooner of that whilst these matters were in a condition to be disputed : For at present, the Weight of the Case inclining totally to one Side, so that we can no longer oppose *France* with *Spain*, as a Barricado against their Designs, we must now think how to become our selves the Counterpoise of *France* and the Defence of *Europe*, by establishing of our Power beyond Seas on solid Foundations, that all other Princes may consider us hereafter as the onely People who are capable of resisting the Design of the *Universal Monarchy* ; and so as *France* it self may not be able impunitively to thwart *England* in this Resolution, because then our Safety will be much more firmly settled by our own strength than with the force of others ; and all those who apprehend the Progress of *France* will conjoyn with us, and become tyed to the Fortune of *England*, as they would be at this instant to *Spain*, if they saw that Monarchy in a Condition to be able to maintain them.

So

So that all those Reasons do oblige me to conclude, that we must no longer hesitate on this point of taking part with *France*, and accept of those advantageous Offers which the *French* make unto us, both in respect of the publick good of *Christendome*, as well as our own particular security; since by being united to them in a Knot of such inseparable Conditions, and on a Conjunction of Affairs, because of which they dare refuse us nothing that we ask, what need we fear from the opposite Conjunction of any other parties?

All the Assistents at this Conference began to express Indignation against this part of his Discourse, and shewed by their Unquietness all the while that he spake thus, that they had much ado to keep from interrupting of him, or to refrain from answering Tumultuously, before that he had made an end. But as they offered to reply in heat all at once, to deliver their thoughts on this subject, the Master of the House, who had not yet delivered his sense to the Company, broke silence, and with a little smile

smile, which had something in it grave, and scornful, dexterously intermingled together, addressing himself to him who had spoken with so much length just before, held on the Debate as follows.

I know your prudence, my Lord, too well (says he), and your Lordship's disinterested zeal for the good of the State, to believe that you can mean seriously what you have urged on the behalf of *France*; but rather am persuaded, (and that easily too) that with an ingenious Artifice you have thus disguised your own true Sentiments of this Case, the better to penetrate into the bottom of ours, and so give opportunity to see clearer through all the Reasons and the Doubts which may be formed there upon touching this Matter, of which we do now treat; since the truth of any Argument doth never so well appear and endure the light, as when it is sifted to the very root, and that the Reflexion thereof is exalted by the opposition of the contrary sense. So that in combating with
your

your Opinion, I shall still think that we doe not disagree, bur rather to dissent in the Exposition of a vain Phantasm, which your erected for sport sake to divert us, and give the Company Recreation.

Allow me then to tell you, that this project, upon which you have thus exercised the acuteness of your wit with so good a Grace, is both unprofitable and Chimærical, no less than shameful and unjust, and ruinous towards *England* to all intents and purposes whatsoever: whereas the design of succouring *Spain* is facil, honourable, profitable, necessary, and suitable to the Fundamental Maxims of our Stare. And if you please to afford me never so little attention, it will not be difficult for me to prove unto you very clearly according to your own Judgement, what I shall propose of this nature; that we shall perfectly accord in one and the same Result, and convince you fully of the truth thereof.

The Design which you mention, is of the like nature, that it were to demolish

molish an old strong Edifice, to build a new Castle in the Air ; or like his, who, to renew his youth, consented to be cut into pieces, and put his several members into an Alembick of Glass. To follow your Counsel then, we must alter the whole Constitution of our Politicks, from innovated Interests and Forreign Maxims, by turning all things upside down, even from the Accidents to the very *Genius* of the Nation, and distil more modern Bloud into the veins of the people than that which they have hereditarily received from Father to Son. But let us, I beseech you, examine on what Ground, and with what Materials this new Edifice is to be raised. That Earth which you have proposed unto us to make it out of, is a moving sort of Sand, or a Floating Island, in which we can never fix on any firm Bottom. 'Tis upon *France* that you would have us establish our Fortune, to found a power which one day may counterbalance the power of the *French*, or at least shelter us from their vast Designs. Nay, you will needs have *France* made the Instrument

Instrument of a greatness in a Neighbour, which they ought to suspect, if they be not besotted by so putting *England* into a state to be able e're long to stop their progresses, and erect a Bulwark in us against themselves. As if *France*, that is our hereditary Enemy, and hath so often tried what we are able to do against the Englarging of their Empire; who have graven deep in their hearts the injury of the Title which (to their shame) *England* carries in all publick Treaties, and her Trophees in reference to that Crown; this very *France*, which hath no greater desire than to take the Dominion of the Sea from us, and the precedency in Commerce, will help us (as you believe) to conquer the *Indies*, in which one third part of his Realm is interested, and of which they do suck away all the Marrow with the semination of their Baubles, by the ill husbandry of the *Spaniards*; She who just now comes from Joynning with our Enemies against us, after she had first contrived how to broach the Quarrel between *England*,
and

and the States of the *United Provinces* under divers false motions; who snatched the Victory out of our hands, when we were morally certain of beating the *Dutch*; who reduced the Bishop of *Munster* to a necessity of separating from us in this War, after that he had received our Assistance in large sums of Money; debauched *Denmark* from our party; hindred the *Suedes* to arme in our favour, and contrived the whole Fabrick of that Affront which we received in the River of *Thames*: Can you, after all these demonstrations of the Rancour which they bear in their hearts against *England*, be so uningenuous as to believe that the *French* will make a Bridge for us on the other side of the Sea, as sincerely intending by this means to make us participate of their conquests with them, or ever to unite in a sound Amity with our Interests? For God's sake then disabuse your self, as soon as you can, out of this gross Errour, if it be so that it hath got the least Fixation in your mind; since you cannot cordially reason thus, or have the

in reference to the French Designs. 41

the least hope of such an Incongruity in the Reason of State of other Nations; without conceiving at the same time that the *French* have lost both their wits and Judgement; of which yet there is no great reason why we should think, as they have handled us in the matter of Negotiations of late: for therein I am sure that we do find them to have more than common sense.

France indeed will be glad to have us for the Instruments of their Ambition, but never for Companions of their Glorie, or Rivals to their Greatness. The *French* do, I confess, seek to make use of us to pull the Chestnut out of the Fire, to save the burning of their fingers; but when that is done, the *French* will not endure that we should eat any bit of the Kernel. And the work which they do now make for us, both at home and abroad, is so incompatible with our Interest and Designs, as well as their own, that their professions towards us at this time cannot possibly be sincere; except they be grown so kind on a sudden, as to over-

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throw

throw all their Fundamental Laws, and in favour of *England* change the whole face of their Designs which they have hitherto bin forming upon *Europe*.

They pretend that the *Low-Coun-tries* are entirely fallen to them by the right of Devolution, which *France* hath forged to belong to its self. Then are all those Provinces by consequence united to the *French* Crown, nor can their King divide or alienate any part of them.

If this be true, to our advantage, though he would never so fain, but that it must be subject still to return again to their Tribunal, they have annulled the *Renunciation* of the *Infanta* of *Spain*, and thereby have formed a Right to the succession of that Monarchy, in case the young King should come to fail of a Successour. So that the most-Christian King can give us no share in the dismembring of *Spain*, without doing prejudice to a Right which he pretends to be acquired unalienably to his Crown,
and

and whereof he himself may not otherwise dispose.

Next, let us view the Materials which we are to have, to build this new Edifice with. Either we must undertake this War at our own Charge, or at the Expence of *France*. If it be undertaken at the Cost of *France*, we must be their Hirelings (at best,) as the *Tartars* be to the *Ottomans*; and cannot move one step beyond What and How they'l have us act: *France*, on these terms, will always hold the Bridle in our teeth, and the *Carveſſon* upon our noses, to make us stop, turn and wind, in the middle of the Courses, just as they please. From the very first moment that we shall grow burthensome unto them, they have but to withdraw their Supplies, to make us fall headlong to the Ground; and then the Share which we pretend in their Conquests doth purely and arbitrarily depend on their discretion.

But if we shall undertake to carry on this Design out of our own proper Purse, who shall furnish us with the Means of doing it? Do you believe that the Par-

liament and the People will give away their Substance to act against the true Interests of the Realm? and that they'll Bleed, to quench the ambitious Thirst of the *French*? or destroy *Spain*, from whence all the abundance of our Commerce is derived; and which even at this Instant grants unto us such notable Advantages by a Treaty which is solemnly ratified?

The part which *France* doth offer us in the Conquests of *Ostend* and *Newport* is a vast Liberality indeed, but still of other folks Goods. It would become them far better to restore back *Dunkirk* to *England*; which they cheated us of by Surprize; or the Town of *Callis*, which they have dismembred from our ancient Dominion. They take from us what is our own already, and present us with nothing but what is not in their power to give; because they cannot bestow either the Title or the Possession of what they do offer in this Kind upon us; which if we will have, we must gain it by the point of the Sword. And this Train which they do shew us, is of the same nature

ture with that sort of Temptations with which the Devil tempted our Saviour from the top of the Pinnacle. But do not you discover that this is a subtile Artifice to imbroil us again in a new War with the States of the *United Provinces*, who have the Interest to defend these two places as much as if either *Amsterdam* or *Flushing* were so designed upon? And without an absolute Naval Victory we can never hope to conquer them; and such a Conquest at Sea too, as shall put the *Hollanders* out of all manner of possibility to afford any Succours in this Case. This is a very hard bone which *France* doth cast in for us to gnaw, whilst they eat all the Marrow out of it. In fine, when the Arms of *France*, joyned to our Forces, shall have put us in possession of these two places; yet they'll be totally unuseful to *England*, when *France* is possessed of all the rest: Because thus the *French* will shut us quite out of the whole Traffick of the *Low Countreys*, and will be alwayes in a Condition to drive the *English* away from thence, unless we do resolve continually to keep a

Fleet at Sea for the conserving of them.

If this Design be hollow and visionary, it is not less shameful than Airy and full of Injustice. We have no manner of Pretension on the Monarchy of *Spain*, nor is it our *Genius* to whet our Spirits to form Castles in the Clouds of Chimærical Rights. What Glory can it be to our Arms to help to oppress a King in Minority, of six years old, by surprize; only because we find him now to be rudely attacked and unprovided; on a frivolous pretext, immediately after the *French* had given the Queen his Mother, and his principal Ministers of State at *Madrid*, such solemn Assurances to the contrary, as well as at *Paris*, touching the inviolable continuation of a good Peace and a sincere Friendship? The manner which *Spain* hath held and acted with us newly in relation to *England*, when we were assaulted by three powerful Enemies at one time, ought to oblige us, at least to be deaf to the artificial Allurements of *France*. For although the *French* have tryed by all the wayes imaginable

ginable, and with Offers incomparably more advantagious than those which they do make to us at present, to the end that so they might have gained the Forces of *Spain* to unite with them to our inevitable Oppression; yet was it never in their Power to shake the unalterable Amity which the *Spanish* Nation have for us by a kind of natural Sympathy, which one knows not how better to express than by the Immutability of it, whether we do oblige or disoblige them. Would it not then be an Ingratitude totally inconsistent with the Honour and the Hospitality of the *English* temper, so soon to forget this Kindness; since at the same instant that *Spain* was the deepliest engaged against *Portugal*, they did notwithstanding openly oppose the Designs of *France* which seemed to the prejudice of *England*, by refusing them (in contemplation of us, firmly and with great resolution) Passage for those Troups of theirs which they sent to ruine the Bishop of *Munster*, our Ally and Confederate then. We cannot complain of any Injurie or Attempt wherein the *Spaniards*

niards have tampered against *England*. No League nor ancient Treaty doth oblige us to second the Designs of *France*; and we cannot conclude new Alliances with the *French* to this purpose, without directly contravening that Treaty which we have lately ratified with *Spain*. Let us see then what the Herald is to say to the *Spaniards* that shall be sent to denounce War unto them on this occasion from *England*; or with what Reasons we shall be able to fill a *Manifesto* which we would offer to the Publick, whereby to justify the Causes of this Rupture. Wherefore I leave the Care, my Lord, to you, being that you seem to be the Author of this Counsel, to found it well in the point of Justice. But pray, see that you perform it better and with more grace than the Writer of the Queen of *France's* Pretensions hath done.

I say farther yet, That this Design is both prejudicial and destructive; and that it carries along with it most pernicious Consequences, as well in the present time as the time to come. For from the very moment that we do break with
Spain,

Spain, our Commerce will cease, with the effects of all those great Advantages which the *Spaniards* have * newly granted unto us: and the Merchants of this Realm, who trade there, will justly be confiscated; since all the Profit that we draw from thence must on these terms infallibly redound in favour of the *Hollanders*, whilst our Arms do busie the *Spaniards* in the *Low Countreys*; and the *French*, as they do their utmost against *Spain*, at the same instant will seize their principal Ports into their power, and thus become absolute Masters of the Commerce, by putting themselves into a Posture to erect a Dominion over the Sea, which we can never afterwards be able to resist. Not above three years ago *France* was hardly able to set forth Twenty Ships, (that is to say, Men of War;) now they have Sixty large Vessels, ready furnished and well armed, and do apply all their industry and pains in every part to augment the number. Could the Ghost of Queen *Elizabeth* re-
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* By the Treaty last ratified at *Madrid* by the Earle of *Sandwich*, His Majesty's Embassadour there.

turn back into the World again, she would justly reproach us who are the Ministers of State here in *England*, for having abandoned her good Maxims, by tamely suffering before our Eyes a Maritime Power to increase, which she so diligently kept down throughout the whole course of her Reign. Whereas you are so far from opposing the Growth of this Power, that you rather seem to desire *England* should facilitate the wayes to make it grow the faster, and render it yet more formidable than it is, by the Acquisition of the Sea-Ports, which in conclusion must infallibly bring *France* to be Mistress of the Commerce of the *Indies*. All the World knows the vast quantity of Money and Arms which the *French* have accumulated to that End alone out of the richest Purses of that Kingdom. I agree to what hath been said before very prudently in this Conference, that our Power and Greatness doth principally consist in the matter of Commerce; and therefore I conclude even from thence, by an unerrable Consequence, that Commerce ought to be
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the chief Object of our Jealousie, and that we are bound to be as tender of the Conservation of this Benefit as of the Apples of our Eyes. But then we must look far off how to prevent whatsoever may hinder the Progress of Trade, or diminish the abundance of this Commerce. We have nothing to fear in this particular on the account of *Spain*, which applies little towards Traffick, and leaveth almost all the Advantages thereof freely to the *English* in their own proper Ports. But if this Interest should fall into the power of an industrious and active Nation, and a People covetous of Gain, as the *French* are, we are not to expect any share of the Utility, or to partake with *France* therein; but rather that they will prescribe the Law of Commerce unto the *English*, according to their own will and pleasure. As soon as ever 'tis known that we do treat of Conjunction with *France*, one of these two things must necessarily happen: either that *Spain*, finding it self incapable to resist the Union of both Forces, will send a Blank to the *French* King,

King to make such Conditions with them as he thinks best, by conceding unto him all their Portion in the *Low Countreys*; or that all the rest of the Powers of *Europe*, justly apprehending so terrible an Union, will joyn with *Spain* to stop the Torrent of our Designs. In the first state of the Case then, we shall quickly find our selves taken for persons deluded in this Negotiation, and *France* only gather all the fruit of the Couzenage; of which the Shame of having been so grossly cheated can only remain to us, when the whole World discerns that the desire of Prey hath prevailed with *England* above the Faith of those solemn Treaties which we have made with the Crown of *Spain*: and thus shall we obtain no other Advantage by having made such a false step, than to have facilitated the means for *France* to unite all the *Low Countreys* to that Crown without striking one Blow, to the eternal and irreparable damage of the Crown of *England*. For who can assure us, that from the same instant when we do declare unto *France* our intention to unite with them,

them, the *French*, instead of uniting their Party with *England*, will not rather prevail the sooner in their Pretensions with *Spain*, to make the *Spaniards*, because of this Apprehension, disposed to accord to whatsoever *France* shall demand? which is, as the old Proverb says, to keep the Mule at our Cost, and hold the stirrup unto the *French*; or play a ridiculous part, in making use only of Scarecrows, and give a false Alarm to favour the Designs of others.

Next, who shall secure us that after *Spain* hath yielded, because of this Apprehension, the *Low Countryes* to the disposition of *France*, That the *Spaniards* and the *French* shall not then streightly unite together, to be revenged of us, and bring us down? The affinity of Bloud, Religion, and the hopes which the *most Christian King* may found to himself upon the Succession to this Monarchy, (if the *Renunciation* of the Queen once comes to be annulled) are strong Links that may very well unite them together; and the Principal of the Division which is at present betwixt them,

them, having no other foundation but reciprocal Jealousie touching the Equality of their Power; this Emulation will expire as soon as ever that *France* doth see *Spain* in a Condition to be no longer able to dispute the sovereign Arbitrage of Christendom with them; and the Cause of their hatred being taken away, all the Effects thereof will cease likewise. And then the common Interests of both will unite them in a Bond which is inseparable any more; from whence our Ruine must infallibly arise; because the Substance and Surety of *England* solely depends upon the Emulation of these two Powers, as the Temperament of a humane Body consists in the opposition of the Elementary Qualities.

But what shall we say of the States of the *United Provinces*? Can we reasonably believe that they'l remain without Motion, or that they'l not awaken at the noise only of this Negotiation, which we shall carry on with *France* to the Destruction of *Spain*? Since 'tis evident, they have no other course to take than to prevent us, but by joyning themselves with

with *France* before we have finished this Treaty, or else to bind their Interests fast with the *Spanish* Crown and the Empire on the first occasion. And then are we excluded from all our Pretensions, and all the hopes of our vast Conquests, which we have fancied unto our selves. And in the next place also shall we be replunged into a long and dangerous War; from whence we came but just now, as it were, to escape with so much difficulty and damage. *France* hath yet proposed nothing unto us directly touching the Ports of *Ostend* and *Newport* to be given to the *English*; and 'tis apparent as to *England*, by sundry authentick Documents, that the *French* have no mind to treat seriously with us on this Point, unless that they do find us disposed to unite with *Spain* and the States of the *United Provinces* for the common Defence. Whereas 'tis no less certain that the *French* have expressly made the very same Propositions, and more advantageous ones, unto the said States, by soliciting them to re-combine with *France* in order to their old design
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of dividing the *Low Countreys* mutually between each other, to the entire Exclusion both of us and the *Spaniards*, being fully agreed as to this particular, at the beginning of the War past.

Whereby 'tis clearly to be foreseen, that *France* considers us no farther than as the worst of their Prospects, and that the *French* will alwayes be ready to buy dearer the Amity of the States of the *United Provinces* than ours. Would it not then be a great imprudence in us, to serve them as Instruments on such disgraceful and disadvantageous Terms, to contribute towards the engaging of the *Hollanders* to their Party? It being out of doubt, that the Jealousie which we should so give them of our Negotiation with *France* would be a powerful incitement to the States, to put them upon being before-hand with us in this Treaty, and cut the Grass after this manner under our Feet. But admit all this should cease, I do not see what Measures we can take at this time with *France*, nor what Assurances or Precautions the *French* may give us in a Treaty, so as
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to shelter *England* from the Danger of that known Maxim of theirs, which is, In all Confederations to be bound by no other Rule but their Interest meerly. I avow that the Rupture of the *Pyrenean Treaty* frights me, and the remembrance of their Proceeding held with us heretofore throughout all the Course of our late War with *Holland* hath made me so incredulous, that they must shew me many Miracles, and evident ones too, before I shall be converted to have the least good opinion of the Sincerity of their Faith and Dealing.

That which you have alledged touching the Support which the Royal House of *England* may particularly hope for from the Amity of *France*, is both a delicate and a dangerous Stone to stir. The Glory and the Safety of our *KING* doth only consist in the Love of his People, and a streight Union betwixt His *MAJESTY* and his present *Parliament*, since He hath no other sound Interest to rely upon but that of the Kingdom, having need of no other Arms or Assistance. The hearty affections of his

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Subjects and his own Royal Vertues will be as so many Citradels erected to maintain his Authority; and any other project is contrary both to his Genius and his admirable Prudence. For all those who shall dare to inspire any other thoughts into His *M A J E S T Y*, will infallibly undergo the weight of his displeasure, as Enemies to his Fame and Quier. But at the Bottom of all, what help can he rationally expect from *France*, should he come to need it, (which God defend) after their unworthy abandoning of the *King* his Father in his great Distress, and of the *King* which now is likewise, when the Wheel of Fortune ran against them, even to the Extirpation of the Royal Line, had not He by whom Kings reign, wonderfully restored them to the Throne of their Ancestors? It was that shameful Treaty which the *French* ratified with those Usurpers then, that sacrificed *CHARLES* the First to the Ambition of the Tyrant *Olivier Cromwel*, who had snatched the Scepter from the right Owners and Proprietors thereof.

Nay,

Nay, to such a degree was the Inhospitability of *France* grown at that time, though his Father were thus execrably Murdered before the eyes of the *French*, our King's own Cozen-german refused him a Retreat that might be secure for his own Person. Therefore 'tis fit that the *English* should be disabused once for all, by being better informed, since *France* is so far from being assisting or useful unto us upon this Conjuncture, that in truth they do seek only to increase our Divisions and Troubles.

For 'tis both their Interest and Maxim so to do: which Conduct hath been exactly and hereditarily observed in their Counsels for many Ages together, (and newly in the last Civil War here) since all the Baits which they do present unto us are but so many Apples of Discord which the *French* Emissaries cast up and down among us, purposely to embroil us with our Neighbours, or else with one another.

Next, let us consider at present whether we shall find our Accompt better with *Spain*. 'Tis evident that solid Reason

son of State doth totally incline us to leave that other way ; and you cannot but all acknowledge this to be our true Fundamental Maxim, whereby we may keep the Balance *in equilibrio* ; and that our Safety doth most consist in such an *equilibrium*: why then should we swerve from thence out of vain hopes, or quit the Body for the Shadow ? The Interest of Commerce no way invites us to take part with *France* : and this Truth is so notorious to all the people of *England*, that there is no Eloquence able to persuade them contrary to their own Experience therein. The Cause is just

and favorable: A young *Pupil unworthily oppressed ; a Peace so solemnly and piously established as lightly violated by a Process of Cavils and Legerdemain, by a Proceeding thereupon full of surprisals and Violence, as well as Pretensions

* Vide The Buckler of State and Justice, Article 4.

unjustly revived after an Authentick * Renunciation ; are so many voices which speak to the Root of our Consciences, to call us to that which

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we owe to Justice, Pity, good Neighbourhood, the Publick Cause of Christendome, and our selves. For in this matter is concerned no less than the Case of Royal Successions, which *France* will needs have submitted to the Customs of ordinary Citizens, and the Conservation of that Bulwark which is common to all these parts of *Europe*, against this Torrent which threatens the whole Vicinity with a great Inundation, and the assuring the Tranquillity of the Christian Republick against an unquiet Nation, that will never desist from disturbing of it until their Insolence shall be abated.

The Foundation then being so solid, because we shall in this Opposition have to treat with a Nation that makes profession of Honour and Generosity, which hath never yet been accused to be guilty of having violated any publick Treaty, and that would rather * hazzard the loss of their Monarchy than their Reputation; the Advantage is both secure and considerable: whereas on the account of *France* we shall appear

* The remarkable Integrity of *Spain*.

but as little Accessories, and the *French* will carry us on as the First Motion, only according to the rapidness of their Progress, by applying us meerly in the course of their Game to their own Ends; and thus shall we become the Ministers of their Ambition, and be made use of like a pair of Stairs, on which they do mean to tread in order to their obtaining the *Universal Monarchy*. In fine, their Interests, if that we are still predestinated to be thus grossly deluded, must be the Rule of ours, and our future Conduct too and Operations. But in taking part with *Spain* we shall be the Arbitrators of Peace and War, and enabled to give the whole weight unto the Resolutions of each Party. Then will *France* consider us with terrour and the apprehension of what our Arms may do, and *Spain* by the addition of our Succours. If we do desire Conquests, we cannot hope for more lawful ones, nor easier Victories, than to re-unite by this means our ancient Dominion in *France*, which have formerly been dismembered from the Crown of *England*. But if we shall
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limit our Designs to the sole establishment of a Peace, we can find the Accompt both of Glory and Safety likewise therein: since it appears by authentick Letters of *Monsieur de Lionn's* writing, that *France* is resolved to be content with Reason, as soon as ever they do see *England* fixed to joyn with *Spain* and the States of the *United Provinces*. So that 'tis in our choice whether to make an advantagious War, or procure an honest Peace, at the first appearance of our preparations in Arms. Whereas, on the contrary, 'tis evident by the Interception of the aforesaid Dispatches, that they will despise all manner of Offices and Mediations that are not Armed, but rather pursue vigorously their Course whither Fortune shall drive it on, so long as they do meet with no powerful Obstacles in the way.

Therefore, because you seem to believe that *Spain* is reduced to so low a Condition, that our Relief would be altogether unuseful to them, and serve for nothing but to bring down the Vengeance of *France* exasperated upon us; for God's sake, cure your self of this

Pannick fear as soon as you can. 'Tis *France* endeavours to erect a formidable Power, if she finds no Opposition in the approaches therunto; and *Spain* probably must sink under the burthen, unless that Crown be succoured: though it is as true also, that the Mischief is easily to be prevented, if Remedies be applied thereunto in due time, and before that the Inconvenience root it self too deep. All the Advantage which *France* hath gained in this last Campaign, is no more than an effect of their Address, and the over-grown Credulity of *Spain*, rather than of their Valour and Power. All the Places which they have conquered in *Flanders*, are but great Countrey-Towns, where the People being ever the strongest, he that is Master of the Field carries always the Keys of them at his Girdle, to enter when he pleases; and the winning of one Battel recovers them back again.

France hath constantly yielded in every thing where she hath found a real Resistance, without gaining any thing beyond what the fright of an incommoded Multitude hath holpen them to acquire

acquire by such a Surprising Invasion. *Spain* hath yet great resorts to recur unto, provided onely they can gain time, and the means of making them meet together, and thus recover their Spirits. We know that she hath made Contracts for considerable sums of Money, and that the *Spaniards* are now about to put themselves in a way to be able shortly to withstand the strongest Shocks of the War: and by the little Diversion of the Forces of *France* which we may make without any prejudice to *England*, we can certainly put *Spain* into a Condition of attacking the *French*, as well as of defending it self, and so shall we reduce *France* into a necessity of demanding peace. *Spain* is not unprovided of Friends nor Allies. The Emperour doth already make a great step in favour of the Circle of *Burgundie*, by taking of it intirely under his Protection, as a Member of his Body. The States of the *United Provinces* are not asleep neither as to their own Proper Interests upon this Conjunction, and after having tried in vain the sweeter wayes of appeasing the Tempest, they will not abandon

don themselves on so pressing an Occasion, being that they do see well enough their Safetie depends absolutely upon their Resolution. We know that they desire a sincere Alliance with us, and that they would make all the progresses necessary towards it, could they but discern in us any real disposition not to reject the Offer. *Sweden*, which is weary to serve but as an Instrument to the Interests of *France*, to the prejudice of their own Affairs, will no doubt also follow our Motions: and the most part (whom rather Fear than Love doth tie unto the Motions of *France*) will questionless take off the Mask, as soon as ever they shall see a considerable Power on foot to Protect them: *France* is a Body replete with ill humours, which will easily degenerate into an universal Corruption, when the *French* are never so little shaken. The Jealousie alone which our Fleet will give them, must needs oblige them to employ the better part of their Troops to furnish their Maritime Coasts; and consequently render them the weaker every-where else. Besides, it is plain that
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in this last Campaign, in which they thought to swallow all up at a bit, they made all the Force that they were able, and yet were not able notwithstanding to bring into the Field above Forty thousand men, after having drawn out of their Garrisons and the Provision of their Towns all the strength almost that they had there, whereby their Frontiers were left naked. Judge then to what point they'll be reduced, when they'll be put both to furnish their Places on all sides, and divide their Troups too, in *Alsatia, Italy, the County of* * *or Catalonia.* * *Rosillon, and Flanders*; and that in all these Countries they'll meet with Enemies to fight against, as well as a multitude of Male-contents at home, no less formidable within the Center of their own proper Bowels. For thus they can build no longer upon the strength of their Army, which is destroyed very near already by Labour, Sicknes, Diseases, and want of Pay. Wherefore they must begin anew, and with fresh charges raise more men, because the ill usage which their Troups have received doth render them so barren of Souldiers, that

that they are compelled to seek Recruits and as it were beg Supplies, with vast sums of Money, from other States. And this Imaginary Fountain of Treasure of theirs, which here is thought to be unexhaustible, will be found to have a bottom when our Fleet doth disturb their Commerce, the Credit which till then they may get with the Par-

* Which is the same thing as our Banquer and Farmers of the Customs.

tisans, by means of oppressing the people, with Tax upon Tax, will fail. The men of business and the Natives, being pressed to unsupportable extremities, will quickly either cast off the yoke, or sink under the burthen and the weight of those Impositions. Their incapacity to hold out any longer is well enough seen, by the impossibility wherein they now find themselves to make good what they have promised the *Portugueses*, whose Friendship hath been formerly so necessary unto them. And if *Spain*, as 'tis hoped that it may do, once shall take a resolution to be delivered of this intestine War with *Portugal* by some Accommodation, the *Spaniards* will soon be in a condition of being useful

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to their Allies, & feared by their Enemies. But if we do suffer the Designs of *France* to pass by undiscovered, & impunitively to permit them to conquer the *Low Countries* towards the total oppression of *Spain*; then I cannot but avow that *France* thus will be most terrible unto us. And in case at present we are afraid of drawing their Revenge on our heads, then shall we have much juster cause to apprehend the future effects of their Ambition. Wherefore at the Bottom of all these Reasons, it seems to me that by the same Principle of apprehension which you have of the *French*, we are obliged to oppose these Progresses of theirs, which if not stopped would yet render them more redoubtable.

If so be that we do fear them in the Field, having so many Friends that do tender their Alliance unto us, our fear were much more justifiable, if after the rejecting of all those Offers, we alone were exposed to their mercy; or that our moderation could exempt us from their out-rages, but on the contrary, rather give the *French* better Conveniences of putting these Violences in Execution

cution, should such an insipid Counsel prevail; for they'l never consider us farther than we do make our selves Considerable. They have Printed Books of their Pretensions to *England*. Experience teaches us (even to this day) that 'tis enough with them to ground a War, without giving them any other cause of * *Scotland and Ireland.* Hostilitie, That we have * Kingdoms belonging to this Monarchy which may very well fit their Designs; which is enough to invite the *French* to attaque them whil'st *England* is weak-

History likewise doth shew us, how that all our Alliances with the house of *Burgundie* have still been glorious and useful, and all those with *France*, unfortunate & prejudicial. 'Tis ever more dangerous to go out of the beaten Road, to travel through By-lanes, unknown, and dark untried Paths.

You'l easily agree with me, that the Union of the *United Provinces* with *France* is the thing of all others which we ought the most to apprehend as fatal to our Crown: and therefore, by consequence, nothing can be more safe
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for *England* than to disunite them. Heaven furnishes us now with an occasion of doing that, which we shall never be able to recover again, should it be neglected: & if we do suffer it to slip away, we shall bring that Republick into a necessity of tying this fatal Knot with *France* stronger than ever it was fastned before. This Union therefore above all others must be the Object of our Care, as it hath of late demonstratively been the cause of our misfortunes.

I conclude then upon solid Foundations, without hesitating, That, in the first place, we must necessarily take part in this War, either with *Spain* or *France*: and next, that we must not engage blind-fold, without taking right Measures with those who have the same Interest that *England* hath in the Case: thirdly, that we must knit our Party firmly together, and get all the Advantages we can in this Treaty with *Spain*, as well as all the Security possible with other States; without yet exacting from *Spain* things which are intolerable unto them, whom the loss of the *Low-Countries* for fear of being reduced by the Exorbitancy

rancy of our Demands, may plunge into a necessity of according to whatever *France* shall require.

This Discourse being ended, I observed by their Countenances, that the two Persons who spake first applauded this Opinion, and that the third man was much shaken. They had some farther speech together, but so softly, that I cannot well collect the sense of it : after which all the Company embraced, and gave one another their hand, with a reciprocal promise of secrecy, as well as an Union in the same Design. And thus they separated each a several way, with evidence of great satisfaction & friendship. And as soon as ever they were gon, I slipped back insensibly again into the former obscurity near the Bed, without being seen by any of the Domesticks. And thus whilst these particulars were fresh in memory, I did set them down in Paper, and all that I could remember of their Discourse, only to satisfy my own Curiosity, and the Curiousness of my Friends.

THE END.

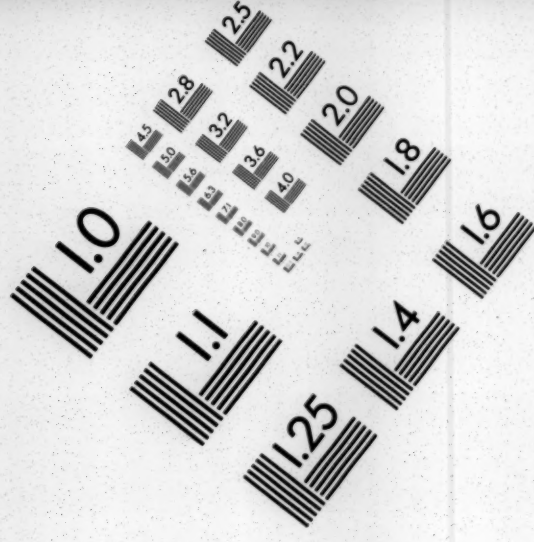
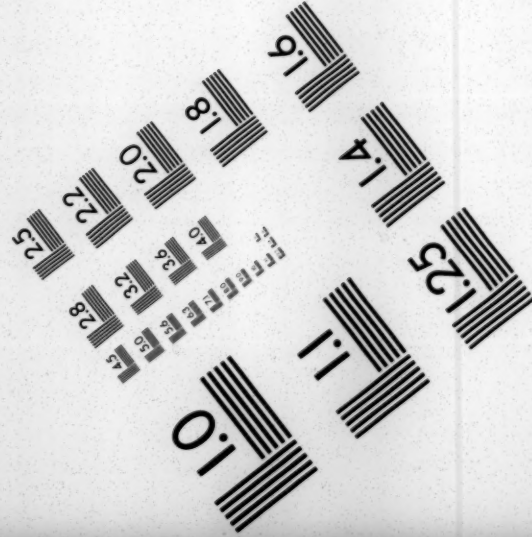


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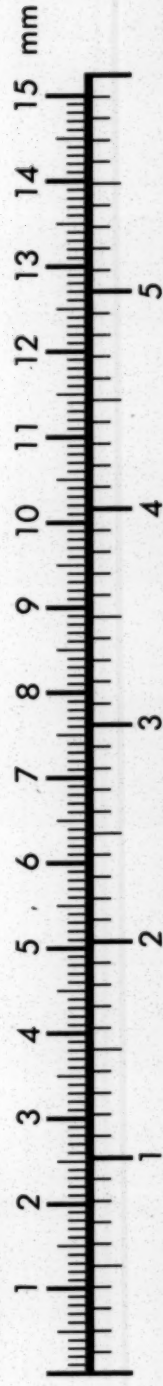
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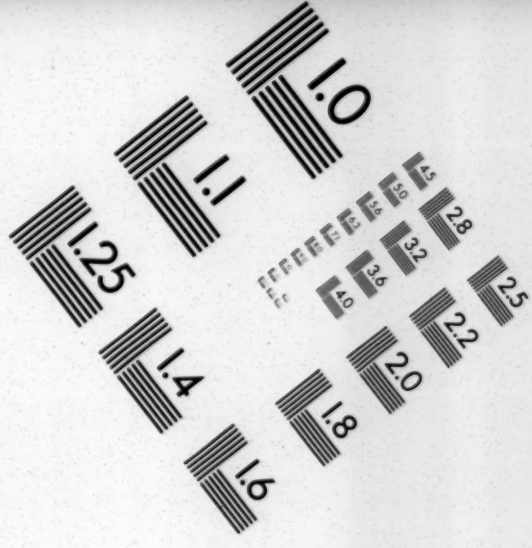
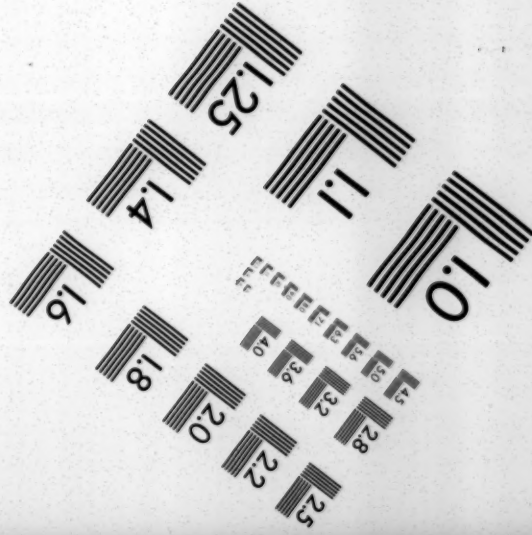
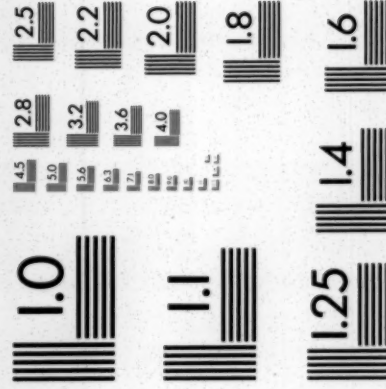
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